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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9851
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUYNAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
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RUHBANB/OKINAWA FLD OFC US FORCES JAPAN CP BUTLER JA PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/USFJ PRIORITY
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 4640
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 7043
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 3416
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 5302
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 8306
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0337
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EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - ANNAPOLIS MEETING

LEAD STORIES: Most Thursday morning papers gave top coverage to the arrest on Wednesday of a former senior Defense Ministry official on suspicion of taking bribes from an arrested former defense trading firm executive.

1. "Implementation of Agreement Not in Sight" The liberal Asahi's report from Annapolis said (11/29): "President Bush announced during the Annapolis meeting on Wednesday an agreement of 'common understanding' between the Israelis and Palestinians to end their conflict and establish a Palestinian state by the end of 2008. The parties plan to hold their first working-group meeting on December 12 and to review progress every two weeks. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov expressed his nation's readiness on Wednesday to host the next round of the peace talks. Implementation, however, will be difficult, as both the Israelis and Palestinians have their own domestic problems."

2. "U.S. Should Be Responsible for Mediation" The liberal Mainichi editorialized (11/29): "The Middle East peace conference held in the U.S. adopted a joint statement on the resumption of the talks between the Israelis and Palestinians. It is encouraging that President Bush, who hosted the meeting, clearly stated that he will do whatever he can to help the negotiations reach a conclusion by the end of 2008. We hope the President will fulfill this responsibility and positively continue his efforts to mediate between the two parties."

3. "Road to Middle East Peace Not in Sight" The

moderate-conservative Yomiuri filed a correspondent report from Annapolis (11/29) arguing: "Although the Middle East peace conference that opened in Annapolis on Tuesday has paved the way for the resumption of peace negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians for the first time in seven years, the conference, which only set a general goal of reaching an agreement by the end of 2008, was a 'political stage' for President Bush to display his contributions to Middle East peace before his term ends. It represents progress that Arab nations that have no diplomatic relations with Israel took part in the conference. The road to the establishment of a Palestinian state, however, is not in sight, as no change can be seen in the Bush administration's pro-Israel position."

14. "President Bush Seeks Results" The liberal Tokyo Shimbun's Washington correspondent wrote (11/29): "President Bush appears to be trying to use the issue of Middle East peace to gain some sort of diplomatic achievement before his term expires. Some observers view the Annapolis meeting as a replay of President Clinton's failed gamble in 2000. It is said that Secretary of State Rice urged the President, who has

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done little on Middle East peace since taking office, to initiate the meeting.... The Bush administration has few tangible diplomatic achievements to show for the past seven years. Secretary Rice appears to have decided to take a chance and pursue Middle East peace, something that proved elusive for previous U.S. administrations."

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SCHIEFFER